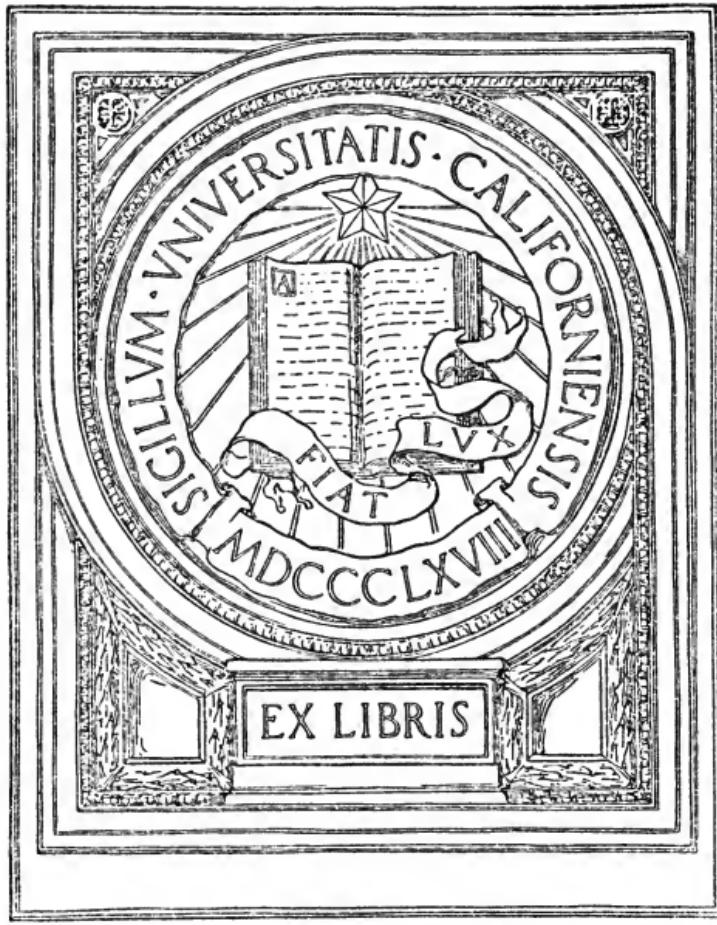


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VISIONS OF

Joseph Smith *the* Seer;

DISCOVERIES OF ANCIENT

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VISIONS OF JOSEPH SMITH,

The Seer.

MR. JOSEPH SMITH, jun., who made the following important discovery, was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, Vermont, on the 23d of December, A. D. 1805. When ten years old his parents, with their family, moved to Palmyra, New York; in the vicinity of which he resided for about eleven years, the latter part in the town of Manchester. Cultivating the earth for a livelihood was his occupation, in which he employed the most of his time. His advantages for acquiring literary knowledge were exceedingly small; hence, his education was limited to a slight acquaintance with two or three of the common branches of learning. He could read without much difficulty, and write a very imperfect hand; and had a very limited understanding of the ground rules of arithmetic. These were his highest and only attainments; while the rest of those branches, so universally taught in the common schools throughout the United States, were entirely unknown to him. When somewhere about fourteen or fifteen years old, he

began seriously to reflect upon the necessity of being prepared for a future state of existence ; but how, or in what way to prepare himself, was a question as yet undetermined in his own mind. He perceived that it was a question of infinite importance, and that the salvation of his soul depended upon a correct understanding of the same. He saw that if he understood not the way, it would be impossible to walk in it except by chance ; and the thought of resting his hopes of eternal life upon chance, or uncertainties, was more than he could endure. If he went to the religious denominations to seek information, each one pointed to its particular tenets, saying —“This is the way, walk ye in it,” while at the same time, the doctrines of each were, in many respects, in direct opposition to one another. It also occurred to his mind that God could be the author of but one doctrine, and therefore could acknowledge but one denomination as his church ; and that such denomination must be a people who believe, and teach that one doctrine, (whatever that may be), and build upon the same. He then reflected on the immense number of doctrines now in the world, which had given rise to many hundreds of different denominations. The great question to be decided in his mind was—If any one of these denominations be the Church of Christ, which one is it ? Until he could become satisfied, in relation to this question, he could not rest contented. To trust to the decisions of fallible men, and build his hopes upon the same, without any certainty and knowledge of his own, would not satisfy the anxious desires that pervaded his breast. To decide without any positive and definite evidence on which he could rely, upon a subject involving the future

welfare of his soul, was revolting to his feelings. The only alternative that seemed to be left him was to read the Scriptures, and endeavor to follow their directions. He accordingly, commenced perusing the sacred pages of the Bible with sincerity, believing the things that he read. His mind soon caught hold of the following passage:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."—James 1:5.

From this promise he learned that it was the privilege of all men to ask God for wisdom, with the sure and certain expectation of receiving liberally; without being upbraided for so doing. This was cheering information to him; tidings that gave him great joy. It was like a light shining forth in a dark place, to guide him to the path in which he should walk. He now saw that if he enquired of God there was not only a possibility, but a probability; yea more, a certainty that he should obtain a knowledge, which of all the doctrines was the doctrine of Christ, and which of all the churches was the church of Christ. He therefore retired to a secret place in a grove, a short distance from his father's house, and knelt down and began to call upon the Lord. At first he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavored to overcome him; but he continued to seek for deliverance, until darkness gave way from his mind, and he was enabled to pray in fervency of the spirit and in faith. And while thus pouring out his soul, anxiously desiring an answer from God, he at length saw a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above, which at first seemed to be at a considerable distance.

He continued praying, while the light appeared to be gradually descending towards him; and as it drew nearer it increased in brightness and magnitude, so that by the time that it reached the tops of the trees, the whole wilderness, for some distance around, was illuminated in a most glorious and brilliant manner. He expected to have seen the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed, as soon as the light came in contact with them; but, perceiving that it did not produce that effect, he was encouraged with the hopes of being able to endure its presence. It continued descending slowly, until it rested upon the earth, and he was enveloped in the midst of it. When it first came upon him, it produced a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; and immediately his mind was caught away from the natural objects with which he was surrounded; and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. He was informed that his sins were forgiven. He was also informed upon the subjects which had for some time previously agitated his mind, viz.—that all the religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines; and, consequently, that none of them was acknowledged of God, as his church and kingdom. And he was expressly commanded to go not after them; and he received a promise that the true doctrine—the fulness of the gospel, should at some future time be made known to him; after which the vision withdrew, leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace, indescribable. Some time after having received this glorious manifestation, being young, he was again entangled in the vanities of

the world, of which he afterwards sincerely and truly repented.

And it pleased God, on the evening of the 21st of September, A. D. 1823, to again hear his prayers. For he had retired to rest as usual, only that his mind was drawn out in fervent prayer, and his soul was filled with the most earnest desire "to commune with some kind messenger, who could communicate to him the desired information of his acceptance with God," and also unfold the principles of the doctrine of Christ, according to the promise which he had received in the former vision. While he thus continued to pour out his desires before the Father of all good, endeavoring to exercise faith in his precious promises, "on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room. Indeed, the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire. This sudden appearance of a light so bright, as might naturally be expected, occasioned a shock or sensation visible to the extremities of the body. It was, however, followed with a calmness and serenity of mind, and an overwhelming rapture of joy, that surpassed understanding, and in a moment, a personage stood before him."

Notwithstanding the brightness of the light which previously illuminated the room, "yet there seemed to be an additional glory surrounding or accompanying this personage, which shone with an increased degree of brilliancy, of which he was in the midst; and though his countenance was as lightning, yet it was of a pleasing, innocent, and glorious appearance; so much so, that

every fear was banished from the heart, and nothing but calmness pervaded the soul."

"The stature of this personage was a little above the common size of men in this age; his garment was perfectly white, and had the appearance of being without seam."

This glorious being declared himself to be an Angel of God, sent forth by commandment to communicate to him that his sins were forgiven, and that his prayers were heard; and also to bring the joyful tidings that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel, concerning their posterity, was at hand to be fulfilled; that the great preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel, in its fulness, to be preached in power unto all nations, that a people might be prepared with faith and righteousness, for the Millennial reign of universal peace and joy.

He was informed that he was called and chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his marvelous purposes in this glorious dispensation. It was also made manifest to him that the "American Indians" were a remnant of Israel; that when they first emigrated to America they were an enlightened people, possessing a knowledge of the true God, enjoying his favor, and peculiar blessings from his hand; that the prophets, and inspired writers among them, were required to keep a sacred history of the most important events transpiring among them: which history was handed down for many generations, till at length they fell into great wickedness: the most part of them were destroyed, and the records (by commandment of

God to one of the last prophets among them) were safely deposited, to preserve them from the hands of the wicked, who sought to destroy them. He was informed that these records contained many sacred revelations pertaining to the gospel of the kingdom, as well as prophecies relating to the great events of the last days; and, that to fulfill his promises to the ancients, who wrote the records, and to accomplish his purposes, in the restitution of their children, &c., they were to come forth to the knowledge of the people. If faithful, he was to be the instrument, who should be thus highly favored in bringing these sacred things to light: at the same time, being expressly informed that it must be done with an eye single to the glory of God, that no one could be entrusted with those sacred writings who should endeavor to aggrandize himself, by converting sacred things to unrighteous and speculative purposes. After giving him many instructions concerning things past and to come, which would be foreign to our purpose to mention here, he disappeared, and the light and glory of God withdrew, leaving his mind in perfect peace, while a calmness and serenity indescribable pervaded the soul. But before morning the vision was twice renewed, instructing him further and still further, concerning the great work of God, about to be performed on the earth. In the morning he went out to his labor as usual; but soon the vision was renewed—the Angel again appeared; and having been informed by the previous visions of the night, concerning the place where those records were deposited, he was instructed to go immediately and view them.

Accordingly he repaired to the place,—a brief de-

scription of which shall be given, in the words of a gentleman, by the name of Oliver Cowdery, who has visited the spot.

"As you pass on the mail-road, from Palmyra, Wayne county, to Canandaigua, Ontario county, New York, before arriving at the little village of Manchester, say from three to four, or about four miles from Palmyra, you pass a large hill on the east side of the road. Why I say large, is because it is as large, perhaps, as any in that country.

"The north end rises quite suddenly, until it assumes a level with the more southerly extremity; and I think I may say an elevation higher than at the south, a short distance, say half or three-fourths of a mile. As you pass towards Canandaigua, it lessens gradually, until the surface assumes its common level, or is broken by other smaller hills or ridges, water-courses and ravines. I think I am justified in saying that this is the highest hill for some distance round, and I am certain that its appearance, as it rises so suddenly from a plain on the north, must attract the notice of a traveler as he passes by." "The north end," which has been described as rising suddenly from the plain, forms "a promontory without timber, but covered with grass." As you pass to the south you soon come to scattering timber, the surface having been cleared by art or wind; and a short distance further left, you are surrounded with the common forest of the country. It is necessary to observe, that even the part cleared, was only occupied for pasture; its steep ascent, and narrow summit, not admitting the plough of the husbandman, with any degree of ease or profit. It was at the second mentioned place

where the record was found to be deposited, on the west side of the hill, not far from the top, down its side; and when myself visited the place in the year 1830, there were several trees standing—enough to cause a shade in summer, but not so much as to prevent the surface being covered with grass—which was also the case when the record was first found.

"How far below the surface these records were," anciently "placed, I am not able to say; but from the fact, that they had been some fourteen hundred years buried, and that, too, on the side of a hill so steep, one is ready to conclude that they were some feet below, as the earth would naturally wear more or less in that length of time. But they, being placed toward the top of the hill, the ground would not remove as much as at two-thirds, perhaps. Another circumstance would prevent a wearing of the earth: in all probability, as soon as timber had time to grow, the hill was covered, and the roots of the same would hold the surface. However, on this point, I shall leave every man to draw his own conclusions, and form his own speculations." But, suffice to say, "a hole of sufficient depth was dug. At the bottom of this was laid a stone of suitable size, the upper surface being smooth. At each edge was placed a large quantity of cement, and into this cement, at the four edges of this stone, were placed erect four others; their bottom edges resting *in* the cement, at the outer edges of the first stone. The four last named, when placed erect, formed a box: the corners, or where the edges of the four came in contact, were also cemented so firmly, that the moisture from without was prevented from entering. It is to be observed, also, that the inner

surfaces of the four erect or side stones were smooth. This box was sufficiently large to admit a breast-plate, such as was used by the ancients to defend the chest, etc., from the arrows and weapons of their enemy. From the bottom of the box, or from the breast-plate, arose three small pillars, composed of the same description of cement used on the edges; and upon these three pillars were placed the records."—"This box containing the records was covered by another stone, the bottom surface being flat, and the upper crowning." When it was first visited by Mr. Smith, on the morning of the 22d of September, 1823, "a part of the crowning stone was visible above the surface, while the edges were concealed by the soil and grass. From which circumstance it may be seen "that however deep this box might have been placed at first, the time had been sufficient to wear the earth, so that it was easily discovered, when once directed, and yet not enough to make a perceptible difference to the passer-by."—"After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in removing the soil from the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents." While viewing and contemplating this sacred treasure with wonder and astonishment, behold! the angel of the Lord, who had previously visited him, again stood in his presence, and his soul was again enlightened as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the heavens were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he thus stood gazing and admiring, the Angel said, "Look!" And as he thus spake, he beheld the Prince of Darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before

him, and the heavenly messenger said, "All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatsoever enticeth and leadeth to good and to do good, is of God, and whatsoever doth not, is of the wicked one. It is he that filleth the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You cannot at this time obtain this record, for the commandment of God is strict, and if ever these sacred things are obtained, they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world; they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain, they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land; and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God, it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who kept the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promise, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record should be kept, and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them must be fulfilled. No man can obtain

them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred." * * * "By them will the Lord work a great and marvelous work; the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed, those who profess to know the truth, but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested, and the power of Satan; you see that there is nothing desirable in the works of darkness; that they can not bring happiness; that those who are overcome therewith are miserable; while, on the other hand, the righteous are blessed with a place in the kingdom of God, where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God, and that he will fulfill his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven. This is the sign; when these things begin to be known; that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow. They will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will

seek to take you life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted, the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that, they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more, for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow the church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified, and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the ten tribes of Israel will be revealed in the north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet,—‘And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgressions in Jacob, saith the Lord.’ But, notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction, the arm of the Lord will be extended, and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage; with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet with these, it shall be a terror, because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel. Now go thy

way, remembering what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations and all the arts and devices of the wicked one. Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, and when he shall manifest unto thee thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain these precious things."

The above quotation is an extract from a letter written by Elder Oliver Cowdery, which was published in the "*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*."

Although many more instructions were given by the mouth of the angel to Mr. Smith, which we do not write in this book, yet the most important items are contained in the foregoing relation. During the period of the four following years he frequently received instructions from the mouth of the heavenly messenger. And on the morning of the 22d of September, A. D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into his hands.

These records were engraved on plates, which had the appearance of gold. Each plate was not far from seven by eight inches in width and length, being not quite as thick as common tin. They were filled on both sides with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book, and fastened at one edge with three rings running through the whole. This volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed.* The characters or letters upon the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, as well as much skill in

* NOTE.—Wm. B. Smith, brother to the prophet, says he saw it weighed, and that it weighed sixty pounds.

the art of engraving. With the records was found "a curious instrument, called by the ancients the Urim and Thummim. This was in use in ancient times by persons called seers. It was an instrument by the use of which they received revelation of things distant, or of things past or future."

In the meantime the inhabitants of that vicinity having been informed that Mr. Smith had seen heavenly visions, and that he had discovered sacred records, began to ridicule and mock at those things. And, after having obtained those sacred things, while proceeding home through the wilderness and fields, he was waylaid by two ruffians, who had secreted themselves for the purpose of robbing him of the records. One of them struck him with a club before he perceived them; but, being a strong man, and large in stature, with great exertion he cleared himself from them, and ran towards home, being closely pursued until he came near his father's house, when his pursuers, for fear of being detected, turned and fled the other way.

Soon the news of his discoveries spread abroad throughout all those parts. False reports, misrepresentations, and base slanders flew as if upon the wings of the wind in every direction. The house was frequently beset by mobs and evil designing persons. Several times he was shot at and very narrowly escaped. Every device was used to get the plates away from him. And, being continually in danger of his life from a gang of abandoned wretches, he at length concluded to leave the place and go to Pennsylvania; and accordingly packed up his goods, putting the plates into a barrel of beans, and proceeded upon his journey. He

had not gone far before he was overtaken by an officer with a search warrant, who flattered himself with the idea that he should surely obtain the plates; after searching very diligently, he was sadly disappointed at not finding them. Mr Smith then drove on; but before he got to his journey's end, he was again overtaken by an officer on the same business, who, after ransacking the wagon very carefully, went his way as much chagrined as the first at not being able to discover the object of his search. Without any further molestation he pursued his journey until he came into the northern part of Pennsylvania, near the Susquehannah river, in which part his father-in-law resided.

Having provided himself with a home, he commenced translating the record by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummim; but, being a poor writer, he was under the necessity of employing a scribe to write the translation as it came from his mouth.

In the meantime a few of the original characters were accurately transcribed and translated by Mr. Smith, which, with the translation, were taken by a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, to the city of New York, where they were presented to a learned gentleman by the name of Anthon, who professed to be extensively acquainted with many languages, both ancient and modern. He examined them, but was unable to decipher them correctly, but he presumed that if the original records could be brought, he could assist in translating them.

But to return. Mr. Smith continued the work of translation, as his pecuniary circumstances would permit,

until he finished the unsealed part of the records. The part translated is entitled the "Book of Mormon," which contains nearly as much reading as the Old Testament.

In this important and most interesting book we can read the history of ancient America, from its early settlement by a colony who came from the tower of Babel at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. By these records we are informed that America in ancient times was inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first, or more ancient race, came directly from the great tower, being called Jaredites. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ, being Israelites, principally the descendants of Joseph. The first nation, or Jaredites, were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remaining remnant, having dwindled into an uncivilized state, still continue to inhabit the land, although divided into a "multitude of nations," and are called by Europeans the "American Indians."

We learn from this very ancient history, that at the confusion of languages, when the Lord scattered the people upon all the face of the earth, the Jaredites being a righteous people, obtained favor in the sight of the Lord, and were not confounded. And because of their righteousness, the Lord miraculously led them from the tower to the great ocean, where they were commanded to build vessels, in which they were marvelously brought across the great deep to the shores of North America.

And the Lord God promised to give them America, which was a very choice land in his sight, for an inheritance. And he swore unto them in his wrath, that whoso should possess this land of promise from that time, henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them, and they were fully ripened in iniquity. Moreover, he promised to make them a great and powerful nation, so that there should be no greater nation upon all the face of the earth.

Accordingly in process of time they became a very numerous and powerful people, occupying principally North America, and building large cities in all quarters of the land, being a civilized and enlightened nation. Agriculture and machinery were carried on to a great extent. Commercial and manufacturing business flourished on every hand; yet, in consequence of wickedness, they were often visited with terrible judgments. Many prophets were raised up among them from generation to generation, who testified against the wickedness of the people, and prophesied of judgments and calamities which awaited them if they did not repent, &c. Sometimes they were visited by pestilence and plagues, and sometimes by famine and war, until at length (having occupied the land some fifteen or sixteen hundred years) their wickedness became so great, that the Lord threatened, by the mouth of his prophets to utterly destroy them from the face of the land. But they gave no heed to these warnings; therefore the word of the Lord was fulfilled, and they were entirely destroyed, leaving their houses, their cities and their lands desolate, and their

sacred records also, which were kept on gold plates were left by one of their last prophets, whose name was Ether, in such a situation that they were discovered by the remnant of Joseph, who soon afterwards were brought from Jerusalem to inherit the land.

This remnant of Joseph were also led in a miraculous manner from Jerusalem, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. They were first led to the eastern borders of the Red Sea; then they journeyed for some time along the borders thereof, nearly in a southeast direction; after which they altered their course nearly eastward, until they came to the great waters where, by the commandment of God, they built a vessel in which they were safely brought across the great Pacific ocean, and landed upon the western coast of South America.

In the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, at the time the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon, another remnant were brought out of Jerusalem, some of whom were descendants of Judah. They landed in North America, but soon after emigrated into the northern parts of South America, where they were discovered by the remnant of Joseph, something like four hundred years afterwards.

From these ancient records we learn that this remnant of Joseph, soon after they landed, separated themselves into two distinct nations. This division was caused by a certain portion of them, because of their righteousness, being greatly persecuted by the remainder. The persecuted nation emigrated towards the northern parts of South America, leaving the wicked nation in possession of the middle and southern parts of the same.

The former were called Nephites, being led by a prophet whose name was Nephi; the latter were called Lamanites, being led by a very wicked man whose name was Laman. The Nephites had in their possession a copy of the Holy Scriptures, viz: the five books of Moses, and the prophecies of the holy prophets down to Jeremiah, in whose days they left Jerusalem. These Scriptures were engraved on plates of brass in the Egyptian language. They themselves also made plates soon after their landing, on which they began to engrave their own history, prophecies, visions, and revelations. All these sacred records were kept by holy and righteous men, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and were carefully preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

And the Lord gave unto them the whole continent for a land of promise, and he promised that they and their children after them should inherit it, on condition of their obedience to his commandments; but if they were disobedient, they should be cut off from his presence. And the Nephites began to prosper in the land according to their righteousness, and they multiplied and spread forth to the east, and west, and north; building large villages, and cities, and synagogues, and temples, together with forts and towers and fortifications to defend themselves against their enemies. And they cultivated the earth, and raised various kinds of grain in abundance. They also raised numerous flocks of domestic animals, and became a very wealthy people; having in abundance gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, &c. Arts and sciences flourished to a great extent. Various kinds of machinery were in use. Cloths of various kinds were manufactured. Swords, cimeters, axes and various

implements of war were made, together with head-shields, arm-shields and breast-plates to defend themselves in battle with their enemies. And in the days of their righteousness they were a civilized, enlightened and happy people.

But, on the other hand, the Lamanites, because of the hardness of their hearts, brought down many judgments upon their own heads; nevertheless they were not destroyed as a nation, but the Lord God sent forth a curse upon them, and they became a dark, loathsome and filthy people. Before their rebellion they were white and exceedingly fair, like the Nephites; but the Lord God cursed them in their complexions, and they were changed to a dark color; and they became a wild, savage and ferocious people, being great enemies to the Nephites, whom they sought by every means to destroy, and many times came against them with their numerous hosts to battle, but were repulsed by the Nephites and driven back to their own possessions, not, however, generally speaking, without great loss on both sides; for tens of thousands were very frequently slain, after which they were piled together in great heaps upon the face of the ground and covered with a shallow covering of earth, which will satisfactorily account for those ancient mounds, filled with human bones, so numerous at the present day, both in North and South America.

The second colony, which left Jerusalem eleven years after the remnant of Joseph left that city, landed in North America and emigrated from thence to the northern parts of South America; and about four hundred years after they were discovered by the Nephites, as we stated in the foregoing.

They were called the people of Zarahemla. They had been perplexed by many wars among themselves; and, having brought no records with them, their language had become corrupted, and they denied the being of God; and at the time they were discovered by the Nephites they were very numerous, and only in a partial state of civilization; but the Nephites united with them and taught them the Holy Scriptures and they were restored to civilization and became one nation with them. And in process of time the Nephites began to build ships near the Isthmus of Darien, and launch them forth into the western ocean, in which great numbers sailed a great distance to the northward, and began to colonize North America. Other colonies emigrated by land, and in a few centuries the whole continent became peopled. North America at that time was almost entirely destitute of timber, it having been cut off by the more ancient race, who came from the great tower at the confusion of languages; but the Nephites became very skillful in building houses of cement, also much timber was carried by the way of shipping from South to North America. They also planted groves and began to raise timber, that in time their wants might be supplied. Large cities were built in various parts of the continent, both among the Lamanites and Nephites. The law of Moses was observed by the latter. Numerous prophets were raised up from time to time throughout their generations. Many records, both historical and prophetical, which were of great size, were kept among them; some on plates of gold and other metals, and some on other materials. The sacred records also of the more ancient race who had been destroyed were

found by them. These were engraved on plates of gold. They translated them into their own language by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummim. They contained an historical account from the creation down to the Tower of Babel, and from that time down until they were destroyed, comprising a period of about thirty-four hundred or thirty-five hundred years. They also contain many prophecies, great and marvelous, reaching forward to the final end and consummation of all things, and the creation of the new heaven and new earth.

The prophets also among the Nephites prophesied of great things. They opened the secrets of futurity, and saw the coming of Messiah in the flesh, and prophesied of the blessing to come upon their descendants in the latter times, and made known the history of unborn generations, and unfolded the grand events of ages to come, and viewed the power and glory and majesty of Messiah's second advent, and beheld the establishment of the kingdom of peace, and gazed upon the glories of the day of righteousness, and saw creation redeemed from the curse, and all the righteous filled with songs of everlasting joy.

The Nephites knew of the birth and crucifixion of Christ, by certain celestial and terrestrial phenomena, which, at those times, were shown forth in fulfillment of the predictions of many of their prophets. Notwithstanding the many blessings with which they had been blessed, they had fallen into great wickedness, and had cast out the Saints and the Prophets, and stoned and killed them. Therefore, at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, they were visited in great judgment. Thick darkness covered

the whole continent. The earth was terribly convulsed. The rocks were rent into broken fragments, and afterwards found in seams and cracks upon all the face of the land. Mountains were sunk into valleys, and valleys raised into mountains. The highways and level roads were broken up and spoiled. Many cities were laid in ruins. Others were buried up in the depths of the earth and mountains occupied their place, while others were sunk and waters came up in their stead, and others still were burned by fire from heaven.

Thus the predictions of their prophets were fulfilled upon their heads. Thus the more wicked part, both of the Nephites and Lamanites, were destroyed. Thus the Almighty executed vengeance and fury upon them, that the blood of the Saints and Prophets might no longer cry from the ground against them.

Those who survived these terrible judgments were favored with the personal ministry of Christ. For after he arose from the dead, and finished his ministry at Jerusalem, and ascended to heaven, he descended in the presence of the Nephites, who were assembled round about their temple in the northern parts of South America. He exhibited to them his wounded hands, and side, and feet; and commanded the law of Moses to be abolished; and introduced and established the Gospel in its stead; and chose twelve disciples from among them to administer the same; and instituted the sacrament; and prayed for and blessed their little children; and healed their sick, and blind, and lame, and deaf, and those who were afflicted in any way, and raised a man from the dead, and showed forth his power in their midst; and expounded the Scriptures which had been

given from the beginning down to that time; and made known unto them all things which should take place down until he should come in his glory, and from that time down to the end, when all people, nations and languages should stand before God to be judged, and the heaven and the earth should pass away, and there should be a new heaven and new earth. These teachings of Jesus were engraved upon plates, some of which are contained in the Book of Mormon; but the more part are not revealed in that book, but are hereafter to be made manifest to the Saints.

After Jesus had finished ministering unto them he ascended into heaven; and the twelve disciples, whom he had chosen, went forth upon all the face of the land preaching the gospel; baptizing those who repented, for the remission of sins, after which they laid their hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Mighty miracles were wrought by them, and also by many of the church. The Nephites and Lamanites were all converted unto the Lord, both in South and North America; and they dwelt in righteousness above three hundred years; but towards the close of the fourth century of the Christian era, they had so far apostatized from God, that he suffered great judgments to fall upon them. The Lamanites, at that time, dwelt in South America, and the Nephites in North America.

A great and terrible war commenced between them which lasted for many years, and resulted in the complete overthrow and destruction of the Nephites. This war commenced at the Isthmus of Darien, and was very destructive to both nations for many years. At length the Nephites were driven before their enemies a great

distance to the north and northeast; and having gathered their whole nation together, both men, women and children, they encamped on and round about the hill Cumorah, where the records were found, which is in the State of New York, about two hundred miles west of the city of Albany. Here they were met by the numerous hosts of the Lamanites, and were slain, and hewn down, and slaughtered, both male and female—the aged, middle aged and children. Hundreds of thousands were slain on both sides, and the nation of the Nephites were destroyed, excepting a few who had deserted over to the Lamanites, and a few who escaped into the south country, and a few who fell wounded, and were left by the Lamanites on the field of battle for dead, among whom were Mormon and his son Moroni, who were righteous men.

Mormon had made an abridgement from the records of his forefathers upon plates, which abridgment he entitled the "Book of Mormon;" and, (being commanded of God), he hid up in the hill Cumorah, all the sacred records of his forefathers which were in his possession, except the abridgment called the "Book of Mormon," which he gave to his son Moroni to finish. Moroni survived his nation a few years, and continued the writings, in which he informs us that the Lamanites hunted those few Nephites who escaped the great and tremendous battle of Cumorah, until they were all destroyed, excepting those who were mingled with the Lamanites, and that he was left alone, and kept himself hid, for they sought to destroy every Nephite who would not deny the Christ. He furthermore states that the Lamanites were at war with one another, and that the whole face

of the land was one continual scene of murdering, robbing and plundering. He continued the history until the four hundred and twentieth year of the Christian era, when, (by the commandment of God), he hid up the records in the hill Cumorah, where they remained concealed until, by the ministry of an angel, they were discovered to Mr. Smith, who, by the gift and power of God, translated them into the English language, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, as stated in the foregoing.

After the book was translated, the Lord raised up witnesses to bear testimony to the nations of its truth, who, at the close of the volume, send forth their testimony, which reads as follows:—

TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken ; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us ; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates ; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare, with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon ; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true ; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it ; wherefore, to be obedient unto the command-

ments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS."

AND ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES.

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold, and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JR.,
HIRAM PAGE,
HIRAM SMITH,

JACOB WHITMER,
JOHN WHITMER,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.,
SAMUEL H. SMITH."

Also in the year 1829, Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowdery having learned the correct mode of baptism from the teachings of the Savior to the ancient Nephites, as recorded in the "Book of Mormon," had a desire to be baptized; but knowing that no one had authority to administer that sacred ordinance in any denomination, they were at a loss to know how the authority was to be restored, and while calling upon the Lord with a desire to be informed on the subject, a holy angel appeared

and stood before them, and laid his hands upon their heads and ordained them, and commanded them to baptize each other, which they accordingly did.

In the year 1830, a large edition of the "Book of Mormon" first appeared in print. And as some began to peruse its sacred pages, the Spirit of the Lord bore record to them that it was true; and they were obedient to its requirements, by coming forth, humbly repenting before the Lord, and being immersed in water, for the remission of sins, after which, by the commandment of God, hands were laid upon them in the name of the Lord, for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And on the sixth of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty, the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" was organized, in the town of Manchester, Ontario County, State of New York, North America. Some few were called and ordained by the Spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach and bear testimony as the Spirit gave them utterance; and although they were the weak things of the earth, yet they were strengthened by the Holy Ghost, and gave forth their testimony in great power, by which means many were brought to repentance, and came forward with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and were immersed in water, confessing their sins, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and saw visions and prophesied. Devils were cast out, and the sick were healed by the prayer of faith and laying on of hands. Thus was the word confirmed unto the faithful by signs following. Thus the Lord raised up witnesses to bear testimony of his name, and lay the foundation of his kingdom in the last days.

And thus the hearts of the Saints were comforted and filled with great joy. In the foregoing we have related the most important facts concerning the visions and the ministry of the angel to Mr. Smith; the discovery of the records; their translation into the English language, and the witnesses raised up to bear testimony of the same.

We have also stated when, and by whom they were written; that they contain the history of nearly one-half of the globe, from the earliest ages after the flood until the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era; that this history is interspersed with many important prophecies which unfold the great events of the last days, and that in it also is recorded the gospel in its fullness and plainness as it was revealed by the personal ministry of Christ to the ancient Nephites. We have also given an account of the restoration of the authority in these days, to administer in the ordinances of the gospel, and of the time of the organization of the church, and of the blessings poured out upon the same while yet in its infancy.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

A short time since a notice was published in the city papers that there would be an exhibition and a lecture delivered by the Rev. R. M. Miller, in the first Presbyterian Church, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, upon some Indian relics lately discovered in some mounds near Newark, Ohio, containing Hebrew inscriptions, and as a matter of course I attended the lecture, as all Latter Day Saints feel considerable interest in all the testimony pertaining to the ancient inhabitants of this land; not because they are any way in the dark upon the history of the past in relation to them, but because additional testimony strengthens the evidence in regard to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, in which they have perfect assurance as being a sacred record, containing the covenant for the gathering of Israel, in conformity with the testimony of the prophets.

The reverend gentleman commenced his lecture by giving a general description of the mounds and ancient fortifications in Ohio and the western country. He said that it was estimated there were in the state of Ohio, alone, ten thousand of them. He gave a very clear and distinct description of the situation and construction of several of them in the neighborhood of Newark, Ohio, from whence the relics he exhibited were obtained. I believe the mounds were from ten to twelve miles apart, where they were found.

The first piece he exhibited was a stone head, (or rather a photograph of it), which was cut off of the neck, close to the ears. On the forehead was written, in Hebrew, "May the Lord have mercy upon an untimely birth." He gave it as his opinion that the person who had it deposited with his remains, had been executed, perhaps decapitated. There was charcoal and burnt bones of animals and men in the debris. The original is in the possession of Mr. Tennant, of Newark, Ohio. It was found in a mound three miles from Newark. In the same mound was found a three cornered piece, upon which was carved two human faces and an animal. On the forehead of one of the figures of a human face was a phylacter, in the form of a skull, upon which was carved the letter used to denote the name of the Almighty. On the forehead of the other carved human figure was written in Hebrew, "It is good to love the aged." On the side of the animal was written in Hebrew something denoting natural depravity. The reverend gentleman said it was the same as found in Jeremiah; "The heart is deceitful," &c. Mr. Strock, of Newark owns this.

The third piece was in the shape of a wedge. On one side was written, in Hebrew:

First side. "*The Lord is king of all the earth.*"

Second side. "*The sword of the Lord is the law.*"

Third side. "*The Holy of Holies.*"

Fourth side. "*The Jew of life is the Lord awaking souls.*"

The fourth piece was what he called a Teraphim, a household god, and quoted Judges xvii. to prove it.

This is a stone about eight inches long, three wide and two thick. There is a depression on one side of

about half an inch deep, and in the depression there is cut the figure of a man dressed in priestly robes, and over his head, in the depression, is written the word "*Moses*"; and in lines on the back and edges is written in Hebrew the ten commandments to Israel, written upon the tables of stone by the finger of the Lord and given to Moses upon the mount. There is some little difference between it and the version of it we have in the "Bible." It is a little more brief. For instance it says, "*Who brought thee from the land of bondage,*" and "*Six days shalt thou labor.*" In our version we have this addition: "*And do all thy work.*" These are all I can now remember, but I thought the brevity made them more perfect.

This Teraphim was found about two and a half miles from Newark, near the base of a very large mound. This mound is composed of stones, and it is thought that 20,000 wagon loads were carried away, some years ago, to build the canal. It was 400 feet at the base and 50 feet high. Near its base a small mound was noticed, which was composed entirely of fire clay, and some of the men at work in that neighborhood thought for curiosity that they would dig into it, and see if any thing particular was in it. The person dug until he came to a piece of wood, upon which he found some copper beads. He took them away and of course exhibited them. This aroused the curiosity of another party, and some two or three persons went and made further search into the fire clay. Upon lifting up the wood it proved to be the lid of a box, lined inside with some kind of coarse cloth, but so entirely rotten that it crumbled at the touch. The box contained a skeleton and what had been a neck-

lace of copper beads, but the string was also rotten. The party removed the wooden box, and began to dig some deeper. They soon struck a stone box of an oblong shape, cemented together in the middle. They shook and found it contained something, as it rattled when shaken. They forced it open and found its contents to be the Teraphim, or image, having these Hebrew inscriptions upon it. If I remember correctly this was found in the year 1865, the others some year or two before. This Teraphim is now the property of Mr. David Johnson of Coshocton, Ohio. The Rev. Miller seems to be a good Hebrew scholar, as he read and criticised the language in the presence of several of the theological professors of the Presbyterian College of Alleghany City. He stated that he had taken them to Cincinnati and shown them to several learned Rabbies, and they were agreed that the Hebrew characters were of a date beyond the time of Ezra. He described on a board the difference of the formation of the letters before and after that period.

I will not repeat their *theories* and *conjectures* respecting the wanderings of the Israelites to reach this land, but this he said was his conclusion:

First. That some of the tribes, or parts of tribes of Israel, had once inhabited this land.

Second. That they were mound builders. But whether the modern Indians are their descendants, or whether they had destroyed the Israelites he could not say; but if the Indians are not the descendants of the mound builders, but had extirpated them then the question remains, where did these Indians come from and who are they?

My own conclusion respecting these things is that of every Latter Day Saint. The relics were hid up in the providence of God, as collateral testimony of the Latter Day Work, and especially of the Book of Mormon.

JOSIAH ELLS.

Pittsburg, Pa., Aug. 12, 1866.

CURIOS RELICS—ANCIENT ISRAELITES| IN AMERICA.

"We are all more or less acquainted with the so-called 'Indian Mounds,' found in various parts of our country. There are hundreds of them in Ohio alone, several near Newark, Licking County. Pipes, copper beads strung upon a vegetable fibre, human skeletons, skulls, bones of animals and birds, some charred by fire, as if they had been sacrificed upon a burning pile, have been obtained from them. For centuries it has been a most interesting subject of inquiry as to who built these mounds and whence came their builders. Within the past few years some relics have been discovered which are thought to throw light on the subject:

The first is a little coarse sandstone, not quite an inch and a half high by about two inches long. It was found in the 'Wilson Mound,' and bears the face of a human being. On the forehead are five distinct Hebrew characters, which are interpreted to mean: "May the Lord have mercy on him (or me) an untimely birth," evidently an expression of humiliation.

The second relic from the same mound is a stone

closely resembling limestone. It is rather triangular than square in its form, and yet it differs widely from both. It represents an animal and contains four human faces and three inscriptions in Hebrew, signifying devotion, reverence and natural depravity.

The third stone was found in 1860, about three miles from Newark. It is shaped like a wedge and is about six inches long, tapering at the end. On one end is a handle and at the top are four Hebrew inscriptions.

The last relic is an object of much interest. It was found in 1860, and has engraved upon it a figure of Moses and the Ten Commandments. One side is depressed and the reverse side protrudes. Over the figure is a Hebrew word signifying "Moses." The other inscriptions are almost literally the words found in some parts of the Bible, and the Ten Commandments are given in part and entirely—the longest being abbreviated. The alphabet used, it is thought, is the original Hebrew one, as there are letters known in the Hebrew alphabet now in use, but bearing a resemblance to them. All things on this stone point to the time before Ezra, * to the lost tribes of Israel, and the theory is that some one of these tribes found their way into this continent and settled where the State of Ohio now exists.—*From the Prophetic Watchman, Sept. 14, 1866.*

* It appears that "the alphabet used, *it is thought*, is the original Hebrew," and why do the Hebrew scholars who have examined the inscriptions only *think* so, and why are they not certain about it? Evidently because there is *only in part* a resemblance between the letters in these inscriptions and the most ancient Hebrew alphabet of which Hebrew scholars have a perfect knowledge. The facts developed by these discoveries, coincide perfectly with a statement of Mormon in Book of Mormon chap. 4, par. 3, who says: "If our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew, but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also."

THE HEBREW RELICS.

[These two inscribed stones have been sent to New York by their discoverer and proprietor, Mr. David Wyrick, of Newark, Ohio, to Mr. Dwight to be submitted by him to the examination of the learned, accompanied with full accounts of the discovery, and maps and drawings illustrating the place and circumstances.]

We suppose that many if not most of our readers have seen, in religious as well as in secular papers, the accounts of some relics which were found a few months ago in a mound near Newark, Ohio. These relics consist of stones of strange shapes, bearing Hebrew inscriptions, which makes the case particularly interesting to me, as a Hebrew. I have read, therefore, with great interest, all that has been published concerning them, and studied the opinions of different men of science and learning, who have expressed them in public; but I desired to see the objects themselves, to put my finger on these relics, which bear [inscriptions of the holy language which once was written with the finger of God upon tables of stone; a language spoken and written by the prophets of Israel, who predicted the main features, not only of the history of Israel but also of the world at large. It is one of the peculiar and natural characteristics of the Jews to feel a sacred awe for that language, and even for "the square characters" in which it is written; so that every written or printed Hebrew page is

called "Shemos," by which the people mean to say, a paper on which holy names are printed or written. A pious Jew would never use any Hebrew book or paper for any secular purpose whatever, and carefully picks up every bit and burns it. Being now, by the grace of God, an "Israelite Indeed," believing in Him concerning whom Moses and the prophets did write, that sacred language has increased in its charming influence upon my mind, this may explain my anxiety to see those reliques with the Hebrew inscriptions, without, however, entertaining the least hope of ever having that wish realized. This time, however, I was gladly disappointed; for, in calling a few days ago on my friend, Mr. Theodore Dwight, (the Recording Secretary of the "American Ethnological Society," and my associate in the editorship of this magazine), my eyes met with the very objects of my desire. That I examined these antiquities carefully none of our readers will, I think, entertain any doubt. I recognized all the letters except one, (the *ayin*), though the forms of many of them are different from those now in use. This, however, is not the case with the stone found first, (viz., in July, 1860), which has the form of an ancient jar, bearing Hebrew inscriptions on its four sides, which are perfectly in such characters as those generally in use now. I cannot form any opinion concerning the use or meaning of this which was found first, as the inscriptions do not lead to any suggestions whatever. They are as follows: 1. "*Debar Jehovah*," (meaning the Word of Jehovah). 2. "*Kodesh Kodeshim*," (The Holy of Holies). 3. "*Thorath Jehovah*," (The Law of Jehovah), and 4. "*Melek Aretz*," (King of the Earth).

What was it intended for? Is it, as some suppose, a relic of ancient Freemasonry? We cannot concur with that idea; because the first question which would suggest itself to our mind is: How did this relic get into a mound of the ancient Indians; and this, too, at such a considerable depth, and altogether singular? We must leave the solution of this problem to after-days, when men of industry and love for antiquities shall perhaps succeed in discovering more relics, by which the present ones may find an explanation.

This, however, is not the case with that before mentioned, which was found on the first of November last. It is evident—at least to my mind—that the writer, or carver, intended to perpetuate the essence of the Divine law, which could not have been done in a better way than by engraving it on a stone of such a nature as should be able to resist all influences of the destroying tooth of time. It is also evident to my mind that the writer was not a Jew or an Israelite, as some suppose, but a proselyte, one who had been taught by a Hebrew, and perhaps converted to abandon his idols, to believe in one living and invisible God, and to keep his commandments. My reasons for believing the writer not to have been a Jew, are briefly these: 1. The veneration which the Hebrews, of all classes, pay to the Holy Scriptures, and particularly to the five books of Moses is so great, that the slightest alteration, even of a point, is considered sinful; and the roll from which they read in the synagogue, in which is found any alteration, transposition of letter, or incorrectness—as, for instance, a *cheth* instead of a *hay*, must be immediately laid by, and not allowed to be used, until corrected. A Hebrew, there-

Bancroft Library

fore, who knew how to write the Ten Commandments, would have either written them perfectly, or not at all; and as there are many mistakes in that engraving, some letters entirely wanting, some transposed, and some superfluous, I conclude the writer was not a Hebrew. 2. The order, or rather disorder, in which the Ten Commandments are engraved—of which we have nothing of a similar kind elsewhere—proves that the author was not a Hebrew. 3. The presence of a human figure, however, is the strongest objection against the supposition that the writer was a Hebrew. Though, in more recent times, after the invention of printing, the Jews began to imitate the Gentiles in having the figure of Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon on the title-pages of their printed Bibles and prayer-books, yet, in ancient days—the age when this stone must have been prepared—no Hebrew would have dared to carve any human figure, even that of Moses, in connection with the Ten Commandments. That this figure led to a fatal mistake is evident from the fact that the Rev. and learned John W. McCarty, of Newark, Ohio, who first deciphered and read the inscription, read the word *'Moshe'*—Moses—over the head of the figure, in connection with the next line on the bas-relief, commencing: “Who brought thee out from the land of Egypt,” thus making Moses instead of Jehovah, the real deliverer of Israel.

The discovery of that very remarkable antiquity confirmed me in my opinion, not that the aborigines of America are of Hebrew descent, but that, at some remote age, and in some now unknown way, one or more pious and distinguished Hebrews came over to this continent, became the teachers of some of the wild tribes of Amer-

ica, and thus introduced not only the knowledge of the true and living Jehovah but to some extent Jewish, or rather Mosaic, rites and ceremonies also. This, I think, is the real reason why, after the invasion of this continent by the priest-ridden and fanatic Spaniards and Portuguese, so many things resembling Judaism and the belief in one who came to enlighten them, but who departed, and promised to come again, was found among the southern tribes of Indians, and all pictures, engravings, and signs of it were destroyed by superstitious priests and monks.

One, or a number of those believing Indians, seeing that, in the absence of their teachers, the people were falling gradually back into their old Pagan habits, became alarmed; and fearing that in a short time all would be forgotten and lost, concluded to preserve, at least, the essence of faith by engraving it on a table of stone. They did it with the best of their knowledge of the Hebrew writing, as well as of the construction of the passage.

The form of the characters is neither the modern Hebrew, (adopted by the High council in consequence of the fact that the "Cuthiyin," or Samaritans, adopted the ancient Hebrew), nor is it the Samaritan, which shows again that the writer or writers had already forgotten much. Of one thing, however, I am morally convinced, that this stone is a genuine relic of antiquity, as it would be a greater difficulty to believe in the invention of such a strange mixture of characters, disorder of combination, and innocent blunders, than to believe it the handiwork of a generation long since passed away.—G. R. LEDERER, in "*Israelite Indeed*," May, 1861.

VALUE OF ANTIQUARIAN EVIDENCE.

From these and from other relics, as well as from the confirmatory traditions of the Indian tribes and nations, as related to the whites, it is plainly evident that the testimony existing outside of the Book of Mormon is alone sufficient to establish the claim of the book that the ancient inhabitants of America *did* possess a knowledge of the Hebrew language, and that, in a modified form, they wrote it upon enduring substances, some of which, as shown, remain unto this day.

And this claim was made by the book, translated and published thirty years before these relics were found or known, and at a time when such an idea concerning the origin of the aborigines of this country was not even thought of by the world. Hence this outside testimony is such that it confirms fully the claim made; for it can neither be fitted to any other use nor be otherwise rationally accounted for or interpreted.

And, not only do science and research show that those ancient people had a knowledge of the Hebrew, but it also brings abundant proof to substantiate another claim of the book, namely that they also understood the Egyptian language. In Mosiah 1:1, it is said that Lehi was learned in that language, and that he taught it to his children. According to the book the Nephites and Lamanites must have been conversant with it, and, in

all probability, they adopted some of the customs, habits, sciences and arts of Egypt, and were governed by them after their arrival in America.

In substantiation of this, yet unknown to the writers of the corroborative evidence, is the language of the antiquarian students and explorers of our day. Mr. Delafield, in his *Antiquities of America*, pages 41 and 42, writes concerning the ancient inhabitants of this land as follows:

"Still further and more important evidenced renders the point conclusive that Southern Asia was the birth place of this people; as we detect among them actual traditions of the flood, the building of Babel and of the death of Abel. * * One of the most interesting sources of comparison between Mexico, Peru and Egypt, is to be found in an investigation of their hieroglyphic system. *Each of these countries* has a peculiar method of recording events by means of hieroglyphic signs, sculpturing them on monuments and buildings and portraying them on papyrus."

He further mentions the correspondence that Baron Humboldt remarked as existing between the Mexican paintings and the writings of Egypt, and adds, on page 46 of his own book, that it is his opinion that further investigations will exhibit "a closer analogy between the Mexican hieroglyphic paintings and the Egyptian," and that he finds three kinds of hieroglyphics "common to both Mexico and Egypt."

For further antiquarian evidence we have not space, yet many pages might be presented, much of which, however, can be found elsewhere, without our transcending the bounds allowed in this small work.

THE THREE WITNESSES.

In addition to the valuable antiquarian evidence herein adduced, and much more that might be, as to the divine mission of Joseph Smith, there stands the solemn and unrecalled testimony of the three witnesses, and also of the eight witnesses, whose names and their depositions are found on page 30 of this pamphlet. These all asserted and affirmed the divine revelation of the book. And, in connection with their testimonies given on that page, we present the fact that these men never swerved from that witness; but, through all the persecution, tribulation, infirmity, old age, and even unto death, they repelled with indignation all efforts made to have them recant and say that their testimonies were lies.

Of the first one of the three witnesses, Oliver Cowdery, it is said that up to the time of his death, which occurred in 1849, he never deviated from his testimony concerning the Book of Mormon, but bore the same witness to the end, namely that it was given of God, and that the work established under Joseph Smith was also divine.

David Whitmer is living yet, (1879), and he has never recalled his testimony concerning the Book of Mormon, but has ever, with great cheerfulness and joy, loved to converse on God's work, and especially to tell

the circumstances surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and to relate his experiences therein, declaring the same things about it that he did when he first subscribed to the divine presentation of the plates to himself and his fellow witnesses; as heretofore recorded in this book. One of his latest reported conversations was in September 1878, when he was interviewed at his home in Richmond, Missouri. In answer to the question as to when he saw the plates, the angel, the other records, etc., he replied:

"It was in June, 1829, the latter part of the month, and the eight witnesses saw them, I think, a day or two after we did. Joseph himself showed the plates to the eight witnesses, but the angel showed them to us, the three witnesses. Martin Harris was not with us this (the first) time but he obtained a view of them afterwards the same day. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon but also the brass plates, and the plates of the Book of Ether, and the plates containing the records of the wickedness and secret combinations of the world down to the time of their being engraved, and also many other plates. * * We were overshadowed by a light, one not like the light of the sun or of a fire, but one more glorious and beautiful. It extended away around us, and in the midst of the light there appeared, as it were, a table, with many plates or records upon it besides the plates of the Book of Mormon; also the sword of Laban, and the directors, (that is the ball which Lehi had), and the interpreter. I saw them just as plainly as I see this bed, (striking with his hand the bed by which he sat), and I heard the voice of the Lord as distinctly as I ever heard any thing in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God."

In answer to the question if he saw the angel of the Lord at that time he replied:

"Yes, he stood before us. Our testimony as recorded is strictly and absolutely true, just as it is written."

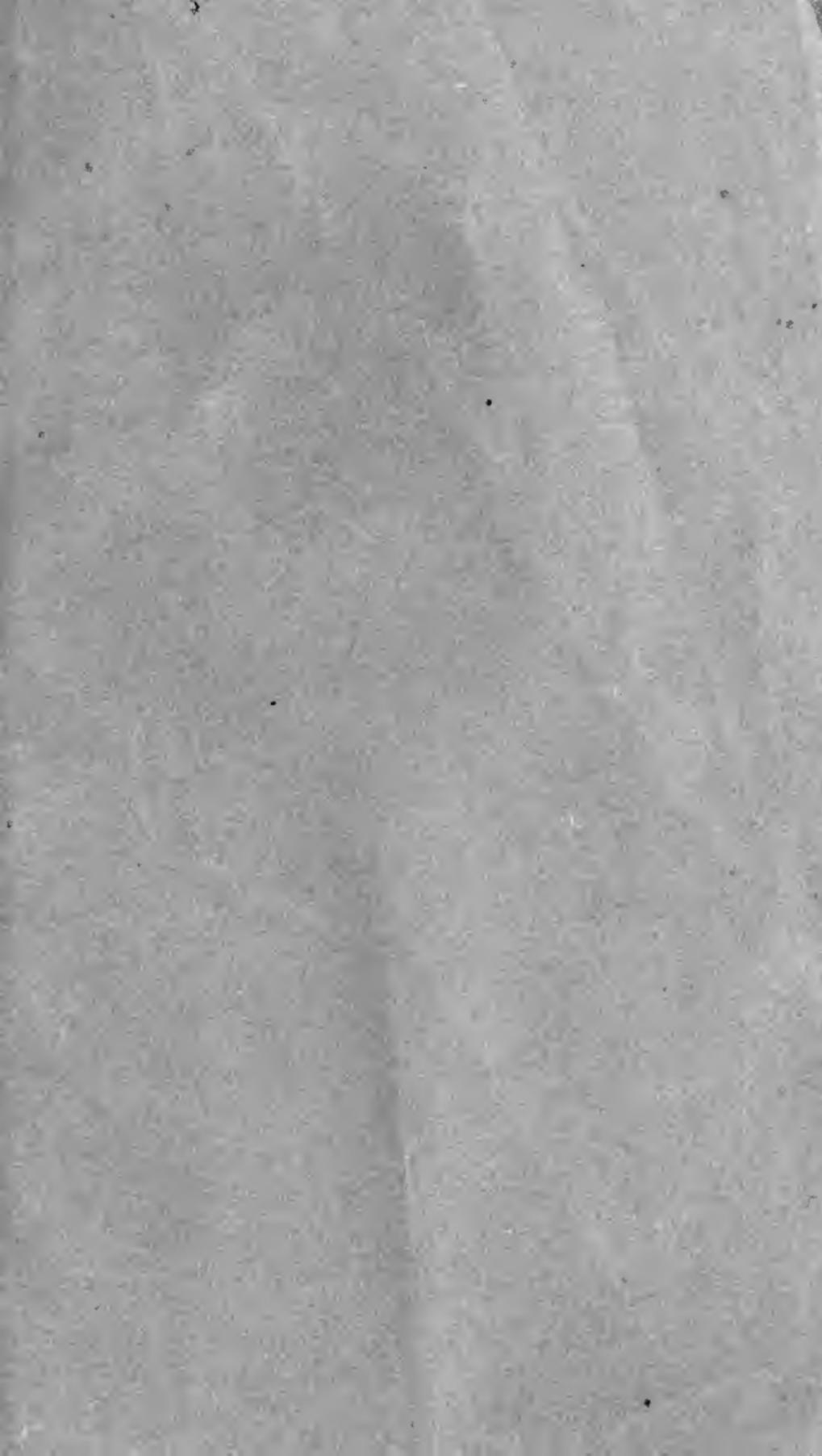
Martin Harris, the third one of the three witnesses, died a few years ago, and, up to the time of his departure for another world, his witness remained the same; and he asserted with vigor and energy the divinity of the Book of Mormon, as revealed to him by the angel and the voice of God, just as the other two say. In a letter written by him in 1870, he said:

"No man ever heard me *in any way* deny either the Book of Mormon, or the administration of the angel that showed me the plates, or the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints under the administration of Joseph Smith, Jr., the prophet, whom the Lord raised up for that purpose in these latter days, that he might show forth his power and glory. The Lord has shown me these things by his Spirit, and by the administration of angels, and confirmed, the same with signs following for the space of forty years. * * I do say that the angel did show me the plates containing the Book of Mormon, and further that the translation that I carried to Prof. Anthon was copied from those plates."—*Saints' Herald*, vol. 22, page 630.

It would seem that any reasonable person should be satisfied to receive these testimonies and to examine for themselves, and to inquire of God himself for a knowledge of the truth of these things, even to call upon Him of whom it is said:

"If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering."—James 1:6-8.

That these truths may find favor with the honest in heart and with those who desire to know God, is our prayer. Amen.



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